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Introduction

The mission of the Montgomery County, Maryland Advanced Practice Center for Public Health Preparedness and Response (Montgomery County APC) is to develop tools and resources for local health departments (LHDs) for preparedness planning, mitigation and response. This toolkit is designed to assist LHDs in conducting a pandemic flu preparedness workshop for home care providers. It will help save time and resources, identify the right partners, locate specific resources, and help LHDs succeed in planning an event that will ultimately prepare the most vulnerable members of their communities.

As LHDs plan and prepare for disaster events such as pandemic flu, two of the more difficult questions continue to be:

- *How can the most vulnerable community residents become prepared for pandemic flu?*
- *How might LHD's pandemic flu preparedness messages reach people with special needs, such as the frail elderly, the disabled, and others?*

The Montgomery County APC wrestled with these questions. One solution was to engage home care agencies in planning for pandemic flu. These agencies appeared to be a common thread in touching many of the diverse populations. Home care is the umbrella term applied to various agencies that provide a range of in-home services to vulnerable populations. (For more a more in-depth description of this target audience, please visit the [Who Is Home Care?](#) section in the toolkit). Home care and public health share a common goal—to ensure that vulnerable populations receive information about personal preparedness so that they know what to do during a disaster.

Together with the Maryland National Capital Homecare Association (MNCHA), Montgomery County APC co-sponsored an educational event for home care providers. With the goal of helping service providers integrate public health preparedness into their daily activities with their clients, we developed a half-day program entitled “Pan Flu & Us: Linking Home Care and Public Health.”

This toolkit provides the following guidance for LHDs to develop a similar program in their communities.

